

Children and Armed Conflict

Recommendations to the Security Council

Monthly Update:
February 2022

SOMALIA

Al-Shabaab is listed in the annexes of the Secretary-General's (SG) latest annual report ([S/2021/437](#)) on children and armed conflict (CAAC) for all five 'trigger' violations, and Ahl al-Sunna wal-Jama'a (ASWJ) is listed for recruitment and use. The Somali Federal Defence and Police Forces are listed for recruitment and use, killing and maiming, and rape and other forms of sexual violence. In February, the SG is expected to report on the implementation of UNSOM and AMISOM's mandates, pursuant to SCR 2592 (2021) and 2568 (2021), respectively. According to the SG's November periodic report ([S/2021/944](#)), the Country Task Force on Monitoring and Reporting (CTFMR) verified the killing and maiming of 190 children, the recruitment and use of 249 children, the abduction of 241 children, incidents of rape and other forms of sexual violence perpetrated against 78 children, and seven attacks on schools between August and November 2021. Al-Shabaab was found responsible for most of the violations (53 percent). **The Security Council should:**

- Call on the Federal Government of Somalia to **strengthen accountability for all grave violations committed against children**, to enact the Child Rights Bill, to adopt the original 2018 Sexual Offences Bill, to ratify the Convention on the Rights of the Child's Optional Protocol on the involvement of children in armed conflict (OPAC) and the African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child, as well as to adopt and implement the African Committee of Experts' General Comment on Children in Situations of Armed Conflict, and to **treat children actually or allegedly associated with armed forces or groups primarily as victims**, in line with the Paris Principles and Commitments;
- Encourage the Federal Government to **implement its commitments under the Safe Schools Declaration**, developing comprehensive risk assessments and risk reduction strategies to prevent and respond to attacks, including child recruitment and sexual violence at, or on the way to or from, school;
- Urge the Federal Government to **fully implement its 2012 action plans on recruitment and use and killing and maiming, as well as its 2019 roadmap**, which includes provisions on sexual violence against children, including by the Somali Police Force, and to swiftly engage with the UN to strengthen its commitments to end and prevent rape and other forms of sexual violence against children; and to **consistently comply with its 2014 Standard Operating Procedures**, including the handover of apprehended children to child protection actors within 72 hours;
- Emphasize the need to **allocate and swiftly deploy sufficient resources** to allow UNSOM to fully deliver on its child protection mandate;
- Call on all parties to **swiftly and fully implement the recommendations of the Security Council Working Group on Children and Armed Conflict (SCWG-CAAC)** elaborated in its fifth [conclusions](#) on Somalia.

The **United Kingdom** is the lead country on Somalia.

SUDAN

Five non-state armed groups (NSAGs) are listed in the annexes of the SG's latest annual report on CAAC for recruitment and use. In February, the SG is expected to report on the implementation of UNITAMS' mandate, pursuant to SCR 2579 (2021). According to the SG's December UNITAMS report ([S/2021/1008](#)), the CTFMR verified 42 grave violations committed against 41 children (30 boys and 11 girls) and one incident of military use of a school between August and November 2021, representing a 90 percent increase from the previous reporting period, with most violations attributed to Sudanese Armed Forces (29 violations). Most of these violations (94 percent) occurred in Darfur. Following the October 2021 military coup, at least [120](#) child rights violations have been reported, including nine children killed during demonstrations in Khartoum and 13 injured. Children as young as 12 have been detained, and frequent attacks on medical facilities have affected children and their access to health care. **The Security Council should:**

- Condemn all grave violations against children, and **demand that all parties uphold their obligations under international humanitarian law (IHL) and human rights law (IHRL)**;
- **Call for accelerated efforts to end impunity for perpetrators** of grave violations, including violations committed by Sudanese Armed Forces, support **comprehensive, gender-sensitive, and age-appropriate response for child survivors**, and encourage Sudanese authorities to engage with the UN to **develop and implement a national prevention plan** on grave violations against children;

Situations involving parties listed for grave violations against children:

Afghanistan
Central African Republic
Colombia
Democratic Republic of Congo
Iraq
Mali
Myanmar
Somalia
South Sudan
Sudan
Syria
Yemen

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SUDAN (cont'd)

- Urge all listed parties to **engage with the UN to develop, sign, and implement action plans to end and prevent grave violations**, and to **expedite implementation of existing action plans** and roadmaps;
- Call for the **protection, rights, well-being, and empowerment of children to be fully incorporated and prioritized in ongoing and future peacebuilding efforts**, and encourage and facilitate consideration of children's views in these processes where possible and compatible with their best interests, pursuant to SCR 2427 (2018) and drawing on the [Practical Guidance for Mediators](#);
- Emphasize the need to **allocate and swiftly deploy sufficient resources** to allow UNITAMS to fully deliver on its child protection mandate;
- Call on all parties to **swiftly and fully implement the recommendations of the SCWG-CAAC elaborated in its sixth conclusions** on children and armed conflict in the Sudan.

The **United Kingdom** is the lead country on Sudan.

Recommendations to the Working Group

Since January 2021, the Working Group has received the SG's reports on children and armed conflict in Myanmar ([S/2020/1243](#)), Syria ([S/2021/398](#)), Afghanistan ([S/2021/662](#)), Yemen ([S/2021/761](#)), and the Central African Republic ([S/2021/882](#)). For targeted recommendations, see Watchlist's 2021 Monthly CAAC updates from [February](#), [June](#), [September](#), [November](#), and [December](#), respectively.

COLOMBIA

In December, the SG released his fifth report on children and armed conflict in Colombia ([S/2021/1022](#)), covering the period from July 2019 to June 2021. During this period, the CTFMR verified 383 grave violations against 330 children (217 boys, 109 girls, 4 of unknown sex). Insecurity, access constraints, and underreporting, linked to mistrust of authorities and fear of reprisals, continued to present a challenge for monitoring and reporting. Additional movement restrictions related to the COVID-19 pandemic further exacerbated existing challenges. Recruitment and use continued to be the most prevalent grave violation verified (220), followed by killing and maiming (118), rape and other forms of sexual violence (14), and abduction (10). The UN also verified eight attacks on schools and hospitals and 13 incidents of denial of humanitarian access. Dissident FARC-EP groups were the main perpetrators, with 141 violations, followed by the *Ejército de Liberación Nacional* (ELN). The Colombian Armed Forces were found responsible for 19 violations and three incidents of military use of schools, and the Colombian Police Force for two violations. Children from indigenous and Afro-Colombian communities, including those subject to confinement, movement restrictions, or forcibly displaced by armed groups, remained disproportionately affected by grave violations, and grave violations were verified against at least eight Venezuelan children. **The Working Group should:**

- Demand that all armed groups, in particular the ELN and FARC-EP dissidents, **immediately release all children under 18 from their ranks and prevent and end all child recruitment, use, and abductions**;
- Urge the Government to continue **strengthening efforts to prevent the recruitment and use of both Colombian and Venezuelan children**, as well as other grave violations, paying particular attention to the most vulnerable, including girls and indigenous and Afro-Colombian children, and noting vulnerability to recruitment at informal border crossings and as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic;
- Call on the Government to **take measures to prevent harm to children and other civilians, including during military operations** by respecting the principles of distinction, proportionality, and precaution, and to **scale up demining and mine risk education activities**;
- Call on all parties to **cease attacks and threats of attack on schools and education personnel**, as well as to refrain from the military use of schools and educational facilities, and **urge the Government to endorse and implement the Safe Schools Declaration**;
- Welcome ongoing efforts by the Government to **strengthen accountability for all grave violations committed against children in armed conflict**, including rape and other forms of sexual violence, and **encourage continued facilitation of child participation in the Truth Commission**, where possible and compatible with their best interests;
- **Urge the resumption of peace talks between the Government and ELN, incorporating and prioritizing the protection, rights, well-being, and empowerment of children**, pursuant to SCR 2427 (2018) and drawing on the [Practical Guidance for Mediators](#).

Presidency of the Security Council for February: Russia

Party to the Geneva Conventions I-IV, Additional Protocols I and II, the Convention on the Rights of the Child and its Optional Protocol on the involvement of children in armed conflict, the Rome Statute of the ICC, and ILO Convention 182. Has endorsed the Paris Principles and Commitments; has not endorsed the Safe Schools Declaration, nor the Vancouver Principles.

NGO RESOURCES

Save the Children, [Violence Intensifies in Myanmar as at Least 150,000 Children Forced from Their Homes in the Year Since Military Coup](#), January 28, 2022

International Committee of the Red Cross, [Explosive Weapons with Wide Area Effects: A Deadly Choice in Populated Areas](#), January 26, 2022

Plan International, [Conflict Leaves Ethiopia's Children Alone and Vulnerable](#), January 19, 2022

Watchlist on Children and Armed Conflict, [Statement on the Occasion of the 25th Anniversary of the United Nations' Children and Armed Conflict Mandate](#), January 18, 2022

Alliance for Child Protection in Humanitarian Action, et al., [The Unprotected: Annual Spotlight on Child Protection Funding in Humanitarian Action – 2021](#), January 17, 2022

Plan International, et al., [Child Marriage in Humanitarian Crises: Girls and Parents Speak Out on Risk and Protective Factors, Decision-Making, and Solutions](#), January 13, 2022

Save the Children, [Burned Bodies of Women, Children Found in Myanmar; Save the Children Staff Missing](#), December 25, 2021